

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-28. (cancelled).

29. (currently amended) An anchoring device for joining two adjacent decking boards having pre-cut receiving slots and a support board, the device consisting essentially of:

- (a) a substantially flat horizontal top element having a top view configuration which includes two substantially parallel sides and has a first predetermined width as measured side to side, said first predetermined width being measured at a maximum width between said two sides, said top element having an imaginary center line;
- (b) at least one substantially vertical support member attached to an underside of said top element along said imaginary center line of said top element and extending downwardly therefrom for a predetermined length, said substantially vertical support member having two sides and a second predetermined width as measured side to side at a maximum width; and,
- (c) a substantially flat horizontal bottom element having a flat bottom view configuration which includes two sides and having a generally

trapezoidal shape, and having a third predetermined width as measured side to side at a maximum width at a trapezoidal base;

wherein said device is made of molded plastic material capable of having a metal fastener driven therethrough; and

wherein said first predetermined width is greater than both said second predetermined width and third predetermined width, and wherein said third predetermined width is greater than said second predetermined width, and said anchoring device is configured to: (i) maintain said top element in a predetermined position during use for joinder of said two adjacent boards and said support board, said sides of said top element engaging said receiving slots of said adjacent decking boards; (ii) position said bottom element upon said support board; and (iii) be attached to said support board by said metal fastener to anchor and support said two adjacent boards on said support board.

30. (previously presented) The anchoring device of claim 29 wherein said vertical support member has a plurality of recesses with support columns located therebetween.

31. (previously presented) The anchoring device of claim 29 wherein said top element two sides are symmetric relative to one another.

32. (previously presented) The anchoring device of claim 29 wherein said top element two sides are parallel to one another.

33. (currently amended) A decking system which comprises:

I. a plurality of decking boards and a support board, each decking board having a top, a bottom, two sides, and two ends,[[,]] and at least one groove located along one of said sides, said groove adapted to receive an anchoring device, said decking boards being situated atop said support board; and

II. an anchoring device which consists essentially of:

(a) a substantially flat horizontal top element having a top view configuration which includes two substantially parallel sides and has a first predetermined width as measured side to side, said first predetermined width being measured a maximum width between said sides of said top element, said top element having an imaginary center line and the sides of said top element being configured to be received in said grooves ;

(b) at least one substantially vertical support member attached to an underside of said top element along said imaginary center line of said top element and extending downwardly therefrom for a predetermined length, said substantially vertical support member having two sides and a second predetermined width as measured side to side at its maximum width; and

(c) a substantially flat horizontal bottom element having a flat bottom view configuration which includes two sides and having a generally

trapezoidal shape, and having a third predetermined width as measured side to side at its maximum width at a trapezoidal base;

wherein said first predetermined width is greater than both said second predetermined width and third predetermined width, and wherein said third predetermined width is greater than said second predetermined width, and said anchoring device is adapted to maintain said top element in a predetermined position during use for joinder of two adjacent boards which have been pre-cut with receiving slots, and to position said bottom element upon said support board on which said two adjacent boards rest for attachment of said anchoring device to said support board for anchoring and support of said two adjacent boards; and,

wherein said anchoring device is made of molded plastic material capable of having a metal fastener driven therethrough; and

further wherein ~~said decking boards are situated atop said support board,~~ said horizontal top element is received in said grooves of said decking boards, said bottom element rests upon said support board, and said anchoring device is anchored by a metal fastener driven therethrough to said support board, whereby said anchoring device joins and supports said decking boards on said support board.

34. (previously presented) The decking system of claim 33 wherein said vertical support member of said anchoring device has a plurality of recesses with support columns located therebetween.

35. (cancelled).

36. (previously presented) The decking system of claim 33 wherein said groove establishes an upper half of each said board above said groove and a lower half of each said board below said groove, wherein said upper half has a greater width than said lower half.

37. (previously presented) The decking system of claim 33 wherein said plurality of decking boards are made of materials selected from the group consisting of synthetic polymers, at least partially foamed synthetic polymers, wood, wood composite, and combinations thereof.

38. (previously presented) The decking system of claim 33 wherein said top element two sides are parallel to one another.